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SPARKS & FLAMES

HENRY W. STRATTON



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SPARKS AND FLAMES

POEMS

By

Henry Wilson Stratton

With a Preface by Hezekiah Butterworth



M. F. Mansfield & A. Wessels
New York

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1899

M. F. Mansfield & A. Wessels

To the Spirit of Poesy : which
warms and vivifies the cold
routine of daily life, and illuminates
our minds, quickening perception
of inward truth : these poems are
dedicated.



Preface.



In these days, when verses are almost as thick as roses in June, it is only poems of distinct inspiration that have a new field, and make an impression and live. The poems in this collection may claim distinct inspiration and to have the mission of inner sight. The thought is occult; it interprets; it deals not with effects, but with causes. It seeks the Soul of things. It interprets life.

It is said that there is nothing that can be imagined, desired, or sought that cannot be achieved. The writer of these poems has had to struggle against dimness of outward vision. But like the compensations that came to Milton and Blacklock, and even to old Homer, his inward vision has been opened and his soul sees.

The poems express this inward light and sight. They belong to the hidden spiritual world. And yet their vocabulary is large and unique; and their figures of speech not only beautiful, but most happily chosen. Some of the comparisons between the seen and the unseen are like visions: they remove the veil, and afford glimpses of the whole universe of life, that spiritual sphere in which all things are one. It gives one pleasure to commend a

work of such rare literary and spiritual qualities. It is a beautiful book of the soul, and to those who live for the soul it cannot fail to be a most helpful revelation of new thought. As music is the highest language of the soul, so much of the thought of the book is associated with themes of this divine art of interpretation. The writer himself is a musician, and so has often made music the subject of his poems.

Every one must wish such a volume the largest success, for it has distinct inspiration and makes clearer the light of life and brighter the spiritual horizons. It has a mission—may its readers be many.

HEZEKIAH BUTTERWORTH.

Contents.



	PAGE
To March,	11
O Life! Thou Beauteous Fire,	12
Sun-Blood,	13
To Life,	15
The Sun-Christ,	16
At Dawn,	17
At Eve,	18
The Circle of Life,	19
The Peak of Night,	20
Lyric to an April Morning,	21
The Angel's Mission,	22
True Music,	24
God's Organ,	25
The Army of the Grasses,	26
Feathered Music,	29
June,	31
To the Leaves,	32
To a Clover Blossom,	33
Strawberries,	34
Idyl,	35
Sun-Money,	36
Alone,	39
June's Thunder Bell,	40
To a Rose,	42
Summer's Song,	43
Sunrise,	44
Reverie,	46
The Bell-Buoy,	47
Her Voice,	49
Dead Sunlight,	51
Dead Soul-Light,	52

	PAGE
Hurrah, Boys !	53
Sunbeam and Moonbeam,	54
Out in the Night,	55
The Death of Summer,	57
The Land of Silence,	58
Autumn Pictures,	61
A Bunch of Grapes,	62
In a Factory,	63
Silence,	65
The Fire of the Leaves,	67
Where Then is Music ?	68
Love's Freedom,	69
To an Autumn Leaf,	70
The Coming of Winter	71
Passion and Peace,	74
Riddle of the Snow-Flakes,	75
The Snow-Cloth Makers,	76
Her Touch,	78
Reversible Poem,	79
East and West,	81
To My Love Across the Snow,	83
Young Christmas,	84
Wrinkled Brow and Dimpled Chin,	85
Morn and Night,	87

To March.

Loud trumpeter of Spring !
Blowing the wintry notes
From out the tune of things,
That warmer tones may float
Through music's honeyed realm—
Soon to thy blare, so bleak,
The flower-flutes shall reply,
And up and down their stems
Sing forth their leaf-notes green ;
Then shall the 'cello bees
Buzz into unison
With piccolo of bird ;
While zephyrs draw the bow
O'er strings of twig and bough,
Making sweet violins
Of all the budding trees.
Blow, trumpeter ! blow out
The frozen chords of sound ;
Blow in the warmth, the life,
The harmonies of heat.

(By kind permission of "The Youth's Companion.")

O Life! Thou Beauteous Fire!



Incendiary Spring!

How at thy touch all life is set a-burning!

Thine is the power to bring

Anew to Matter's realm the spiritual yearning.

Behold each spire of grass!

A slender flame of greenest animation!

The zephyrs as they pass

Fan the fresh fields to emerald conflagration.

Up fly those sparks so bright—

The bee and butterfly in showers exciting,

To wing their minute flight,

Oft in the green combustion re-alighting.

White-hot the daisies burn'!

The brands of buttercup and dandelion

Each other's glow return,

While jets of color burst from many a scion.

The furnace-trees o'erflow

With molten verdure, fast their lives consuming;

While petalled pink and snow

The surge of leafy heat are bright-illumining.

With bluest fire of day,

Blazed o'er with gold, with fleecy smoke inblending,

Mark how the dome of May

O'er all this loveliness, in love is bending!

O Life! thou beauteous fire!

Though unto few thine inner self revealing,

Thy color-sheaths inspire

The hearts of all with holiest thought and feeling.

(By kind permission of "The Youth's Companion.")

Sun : Blood



Golden heart of Day !
Beating midst the blue,
Swung from gray to gray
Into mortal view.

How through arteries wide
Of uncharted sky,
Pours thy yellow tide
Surging silently.

How thy sun-blood warm
Thrills the veins of air,
Tingling Morn's fair form
Into rapture rare.

In the glory-flow,
Hark, the feathered throng !
Darting to and fro—
Corpuscles of song.

Hear the twigs and boughs—
Bones of Day they seem,
Stretch themselves or drowse
In ecstatic dream ;

Sucking up the gold
Streaming thickly down,
Flesh of green to hold
Forming on the brown.

See the grasses dip—
Nerves of Day, so fine,
Feeding, root and tip
On the ample shine.

With papillaed reach
Feeling for the world,
Quivering forth the speech
Deep in ganglia curled.

List the breezes breathe—
Day's emotions large,
How they sigh and seethe
With her soul in charge;

Blow her thought awake
Into scent and bloom,
And the life-pulse shake
From each seedy tomb.

Flow, O blood of flame,
Round your circuit sweep!
Till her quickened frame
Into beauty leap,—

Till your amber hue
With the earth-stains rife,
Sullied, passing through
All the forms of life,—

Changed to light unseen,
Darkened into heat,
To the sun-heart's sheen
Makes a glad retreat;

Through night's purple vein
Pulsing large and free,
Eager to regain
All its purity.

Thus your ring complete,
Wondrous in its might—
Death of light in heat,
Birth of heat in light.

To Life.



O Life ! 'tis wondrous sweet to live for thee
And feed the soul upon thy liberty !
Yea, gorge the soul and be an epicure,
Thy freedom's daintiest morsel to allure !
Few fatten on thy rich, imperial food ;
Few are the banqueters at thy vast table ;
For most to be thy guests are still too rude,
Or deem the splendid banquet but a fable.
Most are but nibblers of the glorious fare
That thou hast spread for all with generous care ;
Their careless lips are strangers to thy wine ;
They never taste thy flavors so divine,
Nor smell the spicy odors that arise
In sprays of fragrance from thy fair supplies.
Most, with a hasty, undigested glance,
Swallow the mouldy bread of ignorance,
And grow dyspeptic on their discontent,
Some panacea e'er seeking to invent
That shall renew the stomach of their lot ;
Yet with its deathful diet quarrel not.
And who shall give these starving millions, eyes,
The leanness of their lives to realize ;
Their skeletons of spirit to behold,
And lack of that immortal, vital gold ?
Who shall awake their dumb, inert repose,
The deaf ears of indifference unclose ;
Teach them to touch and smell and taste at last,
The largess of thy bountiful repast ?
Who but the joyous, heaven-proclaiming poet ?
For truth o'erfills him and he must o'erflow it—
List to the music of the muse of song !
She sings of thee unto the deathward throng !
Now blow ! ye breezes, waft her theme along !

The Sun : Christ.



Now from the tomb of night,
Dawn rolls the cloud away ;
And wrapt in glory bright
Rises the Lord of day.

The essence of the dark awakes its primal pomp to claim ;
The east, all crimson-dappled, breaks in spray of golden flame ;
The morn, hid in the under world, now lifts the lid of gloom,
And poising for her blueward flight, unfolds her wings of bloom ;
Light, crucified in yester's sunset gore, its hue redeems ;
The Sun-Christ, resurrected, shines with glad immortal beams.

Up from his twilight bier
His amber spirit springs,
While musics far and near
Unfold their raptured wings.
Mist-memories of his death
In scarlet scars and seams
Fade as the morning's breath
Blows in the purer beams.
'Tis nature's saviour, come
Her life-pulse to renew
And teach her soul so numb
To find the heavenward clue.

At Dawn.



When twilight's rosy fringes
With stars are beaded round,
And from the nest of silence
Comes many a winged sound ;

When color-sprites are painting
The drowsy blooms awake,
Plying their dewy brushes
The fairest tints to make ;

When up the dawn, some zephyr
Comes searching for the sun,
Breathing the first beams onward
Until the mighty one—

The sun-heart of creation—
Throbs into glory bright,
Beating its golden rhythm
Through all the veins of night ;

Oh then how sweet to wander,
Companionless and free,
Careless of care, unthinking,
Wrapt in the things that be—

Lost unto self and sorrow,
Vanished from conscious sense,
Merged in the golden splendor—
Here, yet forever hence.

At Eve.

&

When twilight's purple fringes
With stars are beaded o'er,
And in the ear of silence
A thousand musics pour

Their soft, subduing measures ;
When from the sleeping blooms
The spirit floats in fragrance
Across the shimmering glooms ;

When down the sky, some zephyr
Comes searching for the moon,
And blows the prelude glimmer
Into the full-orbed tune ;

When leaves like spirit voices
Call to the startled soul,
And whisper of those beauties
That through the ethers roll ;

Oh then how sweet to wander,
Companionless and free,
Careless of care unthinking,
Wrapt in the things that be ;

Lost unto self and sorrow,
Vanished from conscious sense,
Merged in the magic beauty—
Here, yet forever hence.

The Circle of Life.



Life is coming, life is going,
'Midst the paths of peace and pain;
Endlessly the blood is flowing
Back and forth in heart and brain.

To and fro the breeze is breathing
Through the mighty lungs of air;
Up and down the sea is seething
Like a monster in his lair.

In and out the stars are stealing
'Tween the folds of day and night;
Far and near the bells are pealing
In the depth or on the height.

Wings are somewhere always whirring.
Echo never is at rest,
Motion is forever sprouting
Onward to some goal unguessed.

Love itself is ever changing,
Constant things to fickle turn,
God seems ever re-arranging,
Lest mankind His secret learn.

'Tis a race of endless running
For a prize unknown and far;
'Tis a chain whose circuit, cunning,
None may imitate nor mar.

Ours it is, to simply follow
Round and round with willing feet,
Be it hill or be it hollow,
Trusting in His love complete.

The Peak of Night.



To climb!
The time
Sublime!
Your heaven is here.
Of truth is near,
Now tier on tier
Awake your sleeping sight!
Your invitation bright—
Dawn? 'Tis the peak of night,
All things the call to rise obey.
Fragrance and music lead the way.
The dark slants up to find the day,
Why mount ye not the spirit's sunward slope?
Starless and moonless, strangers unto hope—
What is your comfort as ye onward grope?
Whose cold nocturnity no spiritual ray illumines,
Shut in the silence dread, of self-created tombs
O ye who dwell amid the deep material glooms,

(Read from bottom upwards.)

Lyric to an April Morning.



O April morn! blithe April morn!
What though my life of joys is shorn,
Bleeding from discord's jagged wound,
The strings in Pleasure's harp untuned,
Given the staff, denied the strain,
Jarred by the piercing notes of pain,
Until my spirit worn and wrung
With eager music all unsung,
Sends forth a heavenward yearning cry
Claiming its need to sing or die—
Ah, me! what though all tossed and torn!
With thee, I cannot feel forlorn.

Thy sunbeams flash through all my frame,
Re-kindling Hope's expiring flame,
Thy bird-songs ripple through my heart
And solace to my thoughts impart.
Thy zephyrs waft my night away,
And now I glimpse Joy's breaking day.
My pulses catch thy glowing mood
Quick-beating forth their gratitude.
The Spring that makes thy presence bright
So thrills me with its fresh delight,
That I am Spring—the Spring is I—
I am the breeze—the birds—the sky—
O April morn! blithe April morn!
With thee, my life anew is born.

(By permission of "The Youth's Companion.")

The Angel's Mission.



An angel flew to earth one night
And paused in a star-illumined dell,
Where sat a youth whose soul was bright
With more of truth than books can tell.

But o'er the brightness of that soul
Deep yearning like a shadow lay,
And held within its dark control
His shining life, a helpless prey.

Oh, greenly fertile was his mind,
But parched and barren was his heart,
Minerva to his lot was kind
But Venus had forgot her part.

For knowledge, yea, he ever yearned,
He sought to lose himself in lore,
The while for love his spirit burned;
But now his hope was scorched and sore.

The angel saw, then flew afar
To where a maiden knelt in prayer,
Her tresses bathed in moon and star,
Disordered by a drear despair.

Wild wept her spirit to its God—
“ Father, how long this boon deny ?
Alone, unloved, the way I've trod,
I pray Thee, now my need supply.”

Between those wistful stranger souls
Love-threads of gold the angel wove,
Till in that web's resplendent folds
The sufferers felt each other's love.

Led by that visitant divine,
At last each other's eyes they knew,
And o'er their lives through shade and shine
The angel bent, though hid from view.

O ye who oft for love have cried,
Be sure that God your need will meet,
Nor space nor time can e'er divide
The hearts that for each other beat.

True Music.



True music dwells not in the outward notes,
But in the depth and silences between—
E'en as the flower is in the breath that floats
Among the petals, fragrant yet unseen.

For sound is but the wall, uncouth and plain,
Whereby the garden of the tune is known—
And all the rhythmic hushes of the strain
Are wickets in the barrier of tone.

'Tis through these narrow niches—nooks of rest—
That music's voice to ears attuned is brought;
'Tis through these tiny gates of silence blessed
That deeper meanings from within are caught.

Let those too dull for music's finer charm
Extol the shell of song, the storm of sound,
But from the storm remove each lull and calm,
And where would then sweet melody be found?

God's Organ.



An organ is the Spring,
And May-days are the stops.
The sunbeams are the keys
That, yie ding to the touch
Of music's master—Him,
The great God-organist—
Unclose the frosty valves
Of bulb and root and seed.
The earth, as bellows, swells
Her juices rich with life
Through many a range of pipes—
From tiniest grassy stalk,
Flower-stem and fluty reed,
To diapasoned oak—
Till modulated forth
In mingling melodies
Of odor, form and hue,
Bright music blooms her way,
So ravishing the sense
That all her beauty rare,
Pulsing the inner life,
Enthrills the naked soul
With sweetest ecstasy.

The Army of the Grasses.



Serried spears of Spring
From the seed-sheaths drawn,
Driven to the hilt
Through the armor white
Of old Winter wan,
Till his frozen might
Melts in fear away.
How their eager blades,
Ground to sharpest green,
Tell the prowess large
Of their leader fair—
Gentle amazon,
Who with leafy shield,
Azure-helmeted,
Steps their ranks before—
Peerless, sweet, serene.
How her ensigns gay
Purple, white, and gold,
Flutter to the sun ;
By their fragrant folds
Charming dull routine
From the emerald march.
How her *aides-de-camp*,
Butterfly and bee,
Flit upon her will ;
Calling into line
Standard-bearers new,
Bidding tree and shrub
Bloom in “double quick” ;
While the courier breeze
Brings her balmy news
Of the foe’s retreat.

In the verdant van,
Sound the feathered fifes
And the drum-corps loud
Of the woodpeckers ;
While a-tween platoons
Of the plumy troops,
Many a cricket band
Shrills, in martial mood.
'Midst the dewy glooms,
Spring her tent unfolds
Wove of dusk and stars.
Then the firefly glows
On its zigzag beat—
Sentry vigilant,—
And the zephyry scouts
In their sinuous speed
Breathe the countersign.
See the camp-fires gleam
By the glow-worm lit !
List the rustling breath
Of the still brigades,
Sleeping on their arms !
Now, as o'er the host
Grobes the gradual dawn,
From the picket birds
Breaks a fusillade
Of ecstatic notes,
Music-pellets, hurled
At the stragglers white,
Rear-guard of the frost.
Then, as to the files
Of saluting spears
Dipped in glistening dew,
Bends the royal sun,
Bugler Lark with joy
Pipes the signal clear
For a fresh advance.

Rank on rank they spread
Over field and fell,
Pressing back the white
From its prey, the brown.
But the King of Cold
Calls his cloud allies,
And with subtle skill,
Plans an ambuscade
Of defiant drifts.
Flaky legions whirl
On the beryl brave,
Till outflanked, they fall
'Neath the sudden charge.
Now lieutenant May
Hastens to her chief,
Bringing rich reserves ;
Armed with cartridge-pods
Shotted deep with seed,
And with pouches brimmed
By the dust of war,
Pollen-powder bright.
At her coming blithe,
Up the mountain side
Swift the foe retreats
To its native peaks ;
While in victory proud,
Winged warriors trill
Pæans unto Spring.
Clovers flaunt their flags
Of triumphant red,
Daisies, gay of heart,
Wave their pennons pure,
Sweet Arbutus glows
Forth in rapture pink,
And the dandelions
Sumptuously unfurl
Oriflammes of gold.

Feathered Music.



Now the merry feathered pipers
Play the joyous Spring-time in,
Setting myriad feet a-dancing
With the fervor of their din.

Robin trills his tripping measure,
And the lark sings out its soul,
Soon the blue-jay joins the chorus,
And the crow with music droll.

Every leaf and twig is trembling
With the sweet aerial rune,
From their buds the eager blossoms
Hasten forth to hear the tune.

From its seed-house runs the plantlet,
Leaping greenly towards the sky ;
Flowers their petal-wings are spreading,
Tugging at their roots to fly.

Thrush and bobolink and cuckoo
Ripple on the blithe refrain ;
On their finger-tips the grasses
Catch the pulses of the strain.

Springs are bubbling up to listen,
Running out in rills of glee ;
Zephyrs waft the seeds of music
Far and wide o'er hill and lea.

May hath ope'd her ear to hearken,
Dancing o'er the vibrant earth ;
She hath loosed her leafy tresses
And her step is light with mirth.

On her head a cloud-cap fleecy,
Sandals green upon her feet,
Blossoms bright upon her bosom—
Who to dance with her is meet!

Play, ye merry feathered pipers!
Fill the air with sweetest din!
Pipe your loudest! pipe your clearest!
Pipe the dancing Spring-time in!

(By kind permission of "The Youth's Companion.")

June.



'Tis June once more in field and sky,
In grass and tree and flower,
In bee and bird and butterfly,
In shine and shade and shower.

The air is soft with lover's sighs
And sweet with scent and song,
A thousand tender lullabies
Drift Slumber's car along.

'Mid hum and whir and dulcet trill,
The dreaming Summer lies,
Awake with every throb and thrill,
Asleep with half-shut eyes.

The day delights to dally by
And drowse in golden light,
While with her silver-beaming sky
Loiters the lovely night.

'Tis June once more within my heart;
Through all my life 'tis June,
And buds of thoughts discordant, part
To blossom into tune.

(By permission of "The Youth's Companion.")

To the Leaves.



Ye leaves! whose sound so greenly slakes
The thirsty silence of my thought,
With what a wealth of fragrant peace
Your murmurous cadences are fraught!

The soul of Summer to me speaks
Through all your modulations sweet;
Soothed by your cool and lightsome song,
The day forgets its heavy heat.

Unrhythmed music of the trees!
Breathing of things unseen, unheard;
Whispering of a world apart,
By dissonance and death unstirred.

Would like a bird that I might build
Amid your emerald shades my nest,
And trill away the haunting cares
That fill my spirit with unrest!

(By permission of "The Youth's Companion.")

To a Clover Blossom.



Red beacon! shining bright
For wingéd mariners
That sail the sea of air,—
What set thee thus ablaze?
Didst bring these ruddy beams
With patient zeal, along
The stairway of thy cells
In some shut lantern hid,
Lit by the fire of life
Whose spark glowed in thy seed?
Or did thine eager stem
Climb to the burning point
Which comes to pure desire;
Up-pressing, till thy toil,
Impetuous with hope,
Burst into flame of bloom?
Then was thy light self-made,
Lusted from effort high.
And yet this cannot be,
For God must have *His* part.
Methinks thy striving reached
The limit of its power
And found, as striving must,
God's answering blossom there.
Ah, that each human bloom
Like thee would upward strive,
And at self's limit find
The answering help of God!

Strawberries



Nuggets of red sunbeam;
Mined from ore of green;
Dainty, ruby blushes
From earth's face serene.

Pyramids of perfume,
Painted appetite,
Hunger from the outward
Crimsoned into sight.

Into shape projected,
Reddened into taste,
Into smell translated
Or in touch encased.

Hunger mindward pressing,
Pushed by void intense
In the spaces dwelling,
Making stomach-sense.

Hearts aglow and burning
With the sun-blood warm;
Music with red pulses
In the tune of form.

Ruddy rhythm, beating
Color into song;
Tangled notes of perfume,
Sweet sonorous throng!

Jdg'l.



'Twas hand in hand that star-strewn eve,
Adown the road we came,
The hilly road, the winding road,
That ruts and grasses claim.

Tall hedges gloomed on either side,
But through their darkness green,
Anon a light, a cottage light,
Did send its streak of sheen.

The moon flung wide her silver scarf
Across the zephyry night,
We heard the neighboring brooklet laugh
In pebbly, pure delight.

Faint waves of martial music broke
Upon the strand of sense,
The voice of silence dumbly spoke
Our happiness intense.

We echoed back the dreamy mood
That hung o'er hill and sky,
Our spirits quaffed the quietude
With cup of ear and eye.

Love fanned us with his pinions fleet,
We heard his bow-string twang,
And through our hearts his arrow sweet
Pierced with a pleasant pang.

Sun-Money.



Glory of gold!
Nor bought, nor sold,
Mined from the veins that lie in the air;
Coined into beam
Of yellowest gleam,
Fresh from the azure mint so fair.

From stained cloud-ore,
The golden store
By mining breezes is released,
And nugget rays
All brimmed with blaze,
Pour from the pockets of the east.

The bullion bright
Of sifted light,
By silent processes unseen,
Is swiftly cast,
Moulded and massed
From yellow into richest green.

On bush and tree,
To all so free,
The leaves are green-backed into view;
Pledges are they
Made unto May,
Ever redeemed in the sun's own hue.

In lawns and lanes
The golden grains,
In many a petal purse are stored,
While pouch of pod
And safe of sod,
Rich legacies for summer hoard.

From beryl banks,
In swelling ranks
The gold is drawn by seed and scion
'Tis wisely lent
At sweet per cent
To buttercup and dandelion.

Now backward swing
The doors of Spring—
Wide sesame to all the year;
Old Winter halts,
Her treasure-vaults
Beholding with an envious fear.

In bulb and root,
Beyond compute
Her wondrous Eldorado lies;
'Neath spade and plough,
In blade and bough,
He sees her garnered riches rise.

His form, cold-white
Shrinks at the sight,
Her beauties fast his being burn;
On grassy pyre
Of emerald fire,
His flaky locks to daisies turn.

Sun-money large,
From marge to marge
Of glowing sky, profusely strewn—
Great capital
Reserved for all,
Yet e'er in circulation's noon.

No miser's hand
Nor corporate band,
The largess of its light restrains:

No robber's scheme
Nor idler's dream,
For greed, its affluent amber gains.

To caste and creed
It pays no heed,
But yields its currency of shine
To want and wealth,
To pain and health—
Bright lesson of the law divine.

Alone.



Alone with the whispering trees,
With the song of the leaves
Which the gay zephyr weaves
Through the undulant boughs
That his greetings arouse,
With the rush and the gush
Of the leaves.

Alone with my whispering thoughts,
With the song that they sing
As they race in a ring
Round the circuit of mind
Some outlet to find,
With the whirl and the swirl
And the twist and the curl
Of my thoughts.

Alone with theplash of the oar,
As the boat gayly glides
Through the spray-tossing tides
That so silently gleam
In the moon's yellow beam,
With the dip and the slip
And the musical drip
Of the oars.

Alone with the throb of my heart,
With the hope and the dream
That sail its red stream
A harbor to gain
In the welcoming brain,
With the beat and the heat
And the musings so sweet
Of my heart.

(By kind courtesy of "The Youth's Companion.")

June's Thunder Bell.



A mighty bell is the sky so blue !
And now by the fingered lightning swung,
With roll and boom its thunder tongue
Goes throbbing all the spaces through ;

Ringing the earth up into tune,
Ringing the rain from cloud to cloud,
Ringing the hour when blossoms crowd,
Ringing the jubilee of June ;

Tolling far up in its airy throat
Pæans in praise of summer's queen,
Tolling from out the sod, the green,
Thrilling the ground with its triumph note.

Ring, great bell, from the heights of space !
Calling the seeds with voice sublime,
Pushing the trees to leafy prime,
Bursting the buds with thy heavy bass.

A redder scent in the wild rose, ring,
Into the pink a daintier hue,
Into the lake a deeper blue,
Gayer tints in the butterfly's wing.

Reflected in its dulcet hum
Thy welcome chime the bee has caught,
While many a bird of thee well taught
Is thrilling the news that June has come.

The surf its tribute-laces brings
To the silvery shining feet of June ;
And the sea replies to thy rumbling rune
In the surge of song it hoarsely sings

Thy guttural glee, dull labor heeds,
And soon from desk to hammock turns ;
While all the din-hurt highway yearns
Some path to be o'er dewy meads.

Ring, great bass ! while the tenor rain
Runs to earth with pattering feet
The mighty message to repeat,
Drop by drop, to valley and plain.

Thy chant it sings in softer tone,
Telling the floweret's petalled ear
The tidings sweet—that June is here,
Eager to mount her emerald throne.

Ring the rainbow into the heart,
Making it glow with hopes as fair ;
Ring the rifts from the clouds of care,
Showing that pain hath a brighter part.

Bell of the sky, swinging above !
Swinging the silence into sound,
Tell us what clangor more profound,
Shall ring the June of human love.

That June where vice and virtue rhyme,
And life's uneven metre feels
The smoothing pulse of music-peals,
Pealing the world's redemption chime.

To a Rose.

*

Dear flower
On my lape l,
I pray you tell
In soft and fragrant speech
Of her my soul would reach.
Your petals are her parted lips
Whence unto me her sweet breath slips.
The glow upon her cheek was caught by you,
Her thought is in your form so fresh and new,
Rose of my own fair Rose, cradle of Cupid swung
Upon this heaving breast where her fond arms have clung,
What lavish memories at your bidding start!
June on my coat makes June within my heart.
As I behold your dewy red,
Through you our spirits seem to wed;
Your luscious hue and scent
Are for our nuptials lent.
Badge of my bliss,
I joy in this
Sweet Hour.

Summer's Song.

Listen, my soul, to the sweet song of summer,
Rippled and cadenced from wing, wood, and wave,
 Rhythmed so finely,
 Chorused divinely,
Sunbeamed and moonbeamed, stave upon stave.

Hark! it comes pulsing from leaf, twig, and petal,
Tossing and sliding from spray, surf, and crest,
 Humming and shrilling
 And daintily trilling,
For music is now at its sweetest and best.

Many a nook holds a tiny musician
Tuning its treble or buzzing its bass;
 Each in its labor
 Spurring its neighbor,
Vying to win in the resonant race.

Full is the chorus, but what is its burden?
Why is the summer so blithe in her song?
 'Tis her rejoicing
 The music is voicing—
Sense of her freedom the joy-notes prolong.

Tune hath now burst from the bondage of discord,
Silence leaps up into fountains of sound.
 Rest wakes to motion,—
 Thrilled with devotion,
Earth unto God offers praises profound.

Sunrise.



Blown by the breath divine,
The sun-flag, purple-fringed,
With bars of crimson stained,
Its glory-folds unfurled.
Far o'er day's turrets blue,
The mighty banner swung
Its weight of majesty,
Till night with haggard eyes
Vanished in ragged haste;
And all the universe
Was thrilled with ecstasy.
Beneath that ensign bright,
Green-breasted earth awoke;
So raptured by the sight
Her joy took wing and sang
A thousand melodies
That blent in chorus sweet;
And field and garden waved
In salutation glad
Their floral pennons fair,
From whose delicious folds
The playful zephyr sprites
Soft-scented music drew.
The brook-tune blithely broke
Its rippling strains of light
Adown the golden morn.
Over the verdant sea
Of glistening meadow-dew,
Bee-piloted, among
The happy isles of shade
Where dwelt the dreamy kine,
Wandered white fleets of sheep

Whose wake of silvery sound
Tinkled through emerald waves
That sporting, tossed anon
Their spray of butterflies;
While deep 'mid bladed dells
The merman-locust sang.
The wood—cool-corridored,
Librarian of earth,
Thick-memoried with the past,
Breathing of eldest time—
Unto the beauty bent
Its green-plumed reverence;
As if it ne'er had glimpsed
Centuries of scenes as fair.
O Nature! ever new!
Perpetual youth of God!
When may we learn to poise
The gain and loss of life,
And deathless live like thee?

(By kind permission of "The Youth's Companion.")

(Reverie.



With silver tanglement of stars
The dark climbs up the sky,
Its round moon-banner, fair and bright,
Unfurling from on high.

Now o'er the purple plains of air
Those folds of glory glide,
Till nooks of night give up their gloom,
And glows the welkin wide.

From stain of darkness purified,
The earth resplendent lies;
While in that beauty's saving grace
The tides in worship rise.

So, 'mid a tanglement of thoughts,
The sky of mind we climb,
The pure soul-banner to unfold
From spiritual heights sublime.

Now, o'er the sorrow-darkened world,
Unfurl our light divine,
Till nooks of life give up their grief,
And sin's dark places shine.

The Bell-Buoy.



Beacon of sound!
Light for the ear!
Tolling of danger from year to year;
Pushing the keel
With vibrant touch
Far from the sunk reef's ragged clutch;

Telling the helm
In moon or sun
Whither the channel waters run;
Giving the fog
So dumb, a voice,
Bidding the seaman's heart rejoice;

Tolling of wreck
That must not be,
Soothing the riotous surge of the sea,
Music above
The waves' wild will
Solemnly pealing, "Peace—be still."

Bell of the sea!
Bell of the sea!
Swinging in Neptune's turret so free;
Over the shades,
The shifting hues,
Of endless greens and foamy blues;

Over the plash,
The roar, the sweep,
Sending thy salt notes strong and deep—
Lonely as thou

Our lives are cast,
Ringing upon life's sea so vast.

Like unto thee,
Our brain-bells toll
Omens of peril to the soul.
Wide and far
Our thought-notes go
Over the billows of joy and woe,

Over the shades,
The shifting sway
Of endless moods in grave or gay ;
Sounding through storms
Of love and hate,
Sounding in hours of watch and wait ;

Each in its place,
Ringing alone,
The self-same tune with changeless tone ;
Keeping time
Like thee with the tide,
That soul-ships may in safety glide.

Her Voice.



I've heard the bells at even-tide
Their sweetness to the dusk confide
With silvery, lingering tenderness,
That did a wealth of love express ;
While echo's answering caress,
With equal sweetness underlaid,
Came gliding through the shadowy glade,
Where in melodious musing mood,
Companioned by the solitude,
My spirit-being oft hath stood.

I've heard the sweetest note of bird
By soft affection's motive stirred,
Steal through the slumb'rous, starry air
Amongst the dew and perfume rare,
Across the yellow moonlight fair,
Atween the lisping leaves to where
Some drowsy mate within its nest,
Feeling itself by love addressed,
With dulcet syllable replies
And quickly to its lover flies.

I've heard the pensive plash of wave ;
The cricket chant his soothing stave ;
The rain its melody engrave
In dimples on the silent pool ;
The zephyr sing with accents cool,
By undiscovered rhythmic rule,
Unto the parching grass and flowers,
Unto the listless heated hours ;
The leaf, the breeze, the brook, the bee,
Unite in richest harmony,—

But all the sweetness I have heard
From Nature's music ne'er has stirred
My inmost being to rejoice
As hath the sweetness of her voice.

Dead Sunlight.



Not a leaf so greenly waving
But is tomb for some poor sunbeam.
All its life, once shiny golden,
In that fluttering form lies buried.
Lost to light and dulled to freedom,
In the green the yellow slumbers.—
Nay the leaf itself is sunbeam,
Sunbeam moulded to a solid.
Every cell and vein and fibre
Is the light wove into substance ;
Golden ether greened in passing
Into palpable expression ;
Crowded into firmer tissue.
Hath the beam no final waking,
No release from leafy prison ?
Yea ! for when the leaf is fading,
When again appears the yellow,
Like a spirit from its body
Softly glides the self-same sunbeam
Caught amid the emerald meshes.

(By permission of "The Youth's Companion.")

Dead Soul : Light.



Not a face so sweetly smiling
But is tomb for some poor soul-beam ;
All its life once linked with spirit
Now in depths of flesh lies buried ;
Lost to light and dulled to freedom,
Soul, alas ! in body slumbers.—
Nay the very flesh is soul-light,
Soul-light moulded to a solid.
Every cell and vein and muscle
Is the light wove into substance ;
Fire of spirit, fleshed in passing
Into tangible expression—
Earthened by some great transgression.
Is there then no final waking,
From the body no redemption ?
Yea ! for soul, through aspiration,
Of its tomb may make a palace,
Flesh is but our downward thinking,
Hope and faith and love redeem us,
Changing substance into spirit
Till the twain in one are blended.

(By permission of "The Youth's Companion.")

Hurrah, Boys!



With noise
Of shoot and shout,
The merry rout
In South lands, or in North
Gives greeting to the Fourth!
No civic feuds of long ago
These Liliputian patriots know,
For them no war of color, class or creed;
One flag they love, one common impulse heed.
Impartial powder burns the same, for white and black;
Both hold July's red fingers till they smoke and crack;
Torpedoes have no bias in their snaps;
One sulphurous glory all the children wraps.
Such union for their sires were vain
While pride and prejudice remain.
Then hail to happy youth,
So free, so near to truth!
Long hath it stood,
This brotherhood
Of boys.

Sunbeam and Moonbeam.



In my yester life a maid I knew,
Whose soul was flashed with sunbeam ;
What shafts of mirth from her bow of a mouth
Were shot by the merry archer !

What sudden javelins of jest
She threw in her mischievous glances !
The mimic warfare of her fun
No quarter gave, and asked none.

The sunbeams overflowed her heart
And rippled through her tresses,
Invading hand and foot and tongue,
Cascading through her laughter.

But now her sun of joy is set
Her soul is sad with twilight,
And in her firmament of mind
The stars of thought are glowing.

The moonbeam o'er her nature glides,
Its girlish angles smoothing,
The moonbeam silvers all her voice
And in her step it lingers.

It slumbers in her wistful eyes
Soft-sifted through their lashes,
It shines about her crescent lips
In smiles of tender sadness.

Ah, would I knew the maiden now
Suffused with moods of moonlight.
I loved the sunbeam in her soul,
Would I might love the moonbeam.

Out in the Night.



O silver-purple night,
Thick-wove from dusk to dawn
With star-strung threads of dark!
Receive my panting soul
And slake its eager thirst
With draughts of silence pure!
Fed through sonorous day
On diet large of sound,
It craves such nectar sweet.
Upon your azure airs
It yearns to be adrift
And feel the throb of things
Beat up and down the sky;
To rock in riot sweet
With pulses of perfume
Rippled from heart of flower;
To bend with balmy boughs
And tuneful tilt of leaves,
Or eddy with the breeze
In sudden dash and dip;
Chasing the stillness on
From brooding vale to vale,
Wooing with whimsic will
Soft hushes of the gloom;
To flutter with the wings
That flit the dewy deeps,
Or float with yon pale cloud—
Dream-mist that hovers o'er
The cradle-tips of moon—
So yearns my stiffened soul,
Dwarfed to its cell of flesh,
Rigid from long restraint,

Denied these motions free
Whose moods, voluptuous, might,
If unto it transferred,
Some supple sense unfold
Moulded to mate the truths
Hid from our common sight.

The Death of Summer.



Autumn's lance hath wounded Summer,
Piercing through her shield of green,
Till the leafy blood-drops trickle
All her armor-joints between.

On a bier of soft, brown mosses,
See, the bleeding Summer lies!
Gently breathing back the beauty
Drawn from dew and sunny skies.

Hark! the pines with busy needles
Sew a shroud above the dead,
And the cones the breezes gather
For a tablet at the head;

Singing dirges for the glory
Swiftly fading into dust,
Mourning o'er the ruthless rigor,
O'er the law of nature's *must*.

Autumn stands above the conquered,
In her russet sandals shod,
Sad, remorseful, proudly leaning
On her lance of golden-rod.

Musing on her fallen sister,
Musing how they quarrelled so
As to which in truth was fairer
And the stronger to o'erthrow.

Now she weeps, and all her tear-drops
With the soil are quickly wed,
Soon to spring in fragrant clusters
Of the checkerberry red.

The Land of Silence.



Oh, for a land of silence !
Where sound is ever dumb,
And all the notes of music
Like spirit pulses come ;

Where song is but an echo
From out the spaces caught,
By loom of fancy woven
From feeling into thought ;

Where tongues forget to utter
The whisp'lings of the mind,
And speech by lips unspoken
Is by the eyes divined ;

A land of hue and fragrance
Afar from gong and bell,
Where sound is all transmuted,
Perceived through sight and smell,

Redeemed from crude expression,
Withdrawn from outward sign,
Known only as a motion,
Felt through a sense divine ;

Caught up to heights of color,
Revealed in state of bloom,
Tuned into touch with spirit,
Breathed in a rare perfume ;

Hidden in painted music,
Lost in the frozen brook,
Heard in the opening petal,
Voiced in the print of book.

The noise of falling star-beam,
 Of fading sunset hue,
The impact of a shadow,
 The glisten of the dew;

The bird-note heard in impulse
 Ere from the bill it slips,
Theplash of oar suggested
 Ere in the wave it dips;

The leaf in act of lisping,
 The wing about to hum,
The storm-god's arm uplifted
 To beat his thunder-drum;

The *something* left to muse on,
 A tale not wholly told,
A riddle of the ages
 For spirit to unfold;

The ghost of sounds that might be
 But never can be free,
Wearing the chain of silence,
 Stilled by its stern decree;

Freer because of silence,
 In fetters, yet unbound,
Denied the zone of matter,
 Sound held aloof from sound;—

Such is the realm I sigh for,
 With hints of earth-land rife,
Or say this rude existence
 Hints at that higher life;

For sound is but the shadow
 By rays of silence shed,
And though our souls be lighted
 Our feet in darkness tread.

O silent land, and holy !
Where is your kingdom fair ?
Amid the pores of ocean,
Within the cells of air ?

Where ears forget to listen,
And where sensations fail
To pierce with vibrant lances
The hardened, fleshly veil ?

Where nerves refuse to thicken
The thought-films into speech,
Or thin the outward musics
The inward sense to reach ?

Far in the deeps of feeling,
High on the steeps of mind ?
In dream ? in death ? Oh, tell me,
Where I your land may find.

Autumn Pictures.

&

I.

The roadway winds 'tween swaying rows of green and gold,
Whose boughs in friendship's arch entwined, display
The throne of Autumn, whence anon
Mute leaf-canaries fly
In fluttering flocks.
I lean
On mossy rocks
And view the pumpkins nigh,
That lie like golden nuggets on
The ground, well-guarded by a proud array
Of podded poles and corn-stalks, 'gainst the staring wold.

II.

Its yellow, yearning leaves to curl, the grape vine tries;
And now, I see alighting on its trellis-top,
A plump, red-breasted music sprite,
Who looks with lonesome air
Upon the view
Serene;
His comrades flew
Ere he perchance was 'ware
To greet the South; now in his flight
He sees a leaflet from its kindred drop,
And winging where it fell he chirps to sympathize.

A Bunch of Grapes.



Tune with purple pulses
Pitched in key of light,
Clustered notes of fragrance,
Music heard through sight !

Cone of purple sunbeams
Nested in the vine,
Filled with joy of juices—
Light wove into wine !

Life through matter moulded
Into roundest shape ;
Thought in globed expression,
Soul in form of grape !

Family of planets,
Orbed from seed and bloom,
Stamped with spherul birthmark
From creation's womb !

With a mighty meaning
Every globule swells,
For in form's deep language
God His purpose tells.

In a Factory.



The air goes round
With rims of sound,
Off-thrown from many a busy wheel ;
In curve and sphere
I seem to hear,
In circling grooves I think and feel.

My fancy curls,
My reason whirls,
My sense of straight hath lost its sway ;
A wheel am I
And round I fly
The outward impulse to obey.

What fragrance fine
Of oak and pine
Comes rolling from the screaming saw !
What buzz and boom
Thrill through the room
And startle with a sudden awe !

Each swift machine
With mighty spleen
Tears from the wood its soul of scent ;
While at the shock
Bodies of block
Turn into dust with loud lament.

Anon there slips
A rain of chips
From churring lathe or sliding log ;
And 'midst the roar
Of cut and bore
The workmen shout as in a fog.

From rift to rift
Their voices drift
Across the strange sonorous mist,
Whose pulses throng
My nerves along
Like influence from a hypnotist.

My ear it charms,
My tongue it calms,
Its motion stills my power to think;
'Neath its control
My drowsy soul
Must soon slip o'er oblivion's brink.

But with a swirl
A shaving's curl
Upon my ample beard is caught;
The spell it breaks,
My spirit wakes
To belt anew the wheels of thought.

Silence.



Have you ever stood
In the Autumn wood,
Alone with its crimson, gold, and umber,
When all was still
With a nameless thrill,
And the breeze was wrapt in fragrant slumber ?
When naught befell
To break the spell
Save the snap of a leaf grown ripe for falling,
Or the hubbub harsh
From a far-off marsh,
Or din of crows in the distance calling ?

Did you ever bide
At the turn of the tide,
When from the ebb with eager wooing,
In sudden swirl
The waves did curl,
Unto the strand their vows renewing—
As if the deep
Awoke from its sleep
With a startled sense of its lonely being,
And surged through the kelp
With a cry for help
From the fear in its mighty bosom fleeing ?

Did you ever kneel
With a dumb appeal
By the shrouded bier when the flowers were springing,
And hear in your soul
The death-bell toll
Your loved one's curfew, ruthlessly ringing ?

When you and your doubt
Seemed all shut out
From the beauties of color and song around you,
And soothing words,
And cooing birds,
Seemed links in the chain of grief that bound you?

Did you ever move
In the world-worn groove
Of streets with hoof and wheel sonorous,
Unseen, unknown,
No welcoming tone
Sounding for you in the clamorous chorus;
'Mong sleek and slim,
'Midst the vender's vim,
And the tongues of trade in ceaseless babble;
One of the throng,
Yet thrust along
Alone, apart from the roar and rabble?

Then unto you
O, one of the few,
To know what silence is, 'tis given—
That hallowed hush,
Amid the crush
Of things by fate so rudely driven.
Your soul imbued
With solitude,
The dross of daily living loses,
'Till buoyant, free
The truth to see,
The paths of peace it gladly chooses.

The Fire of the Leaves.



With her torch of golden-rod
Autumn sets the woods a-burning,
All the green of tree and sod
Into blaze of beauty turning.

See the flames of every hue
Down the emerald arches sweeping,
Avalanching on the view
Like a rainbow tempest leaping.

How the leaf-sparks redly fly
'Midst the rustling conflagration,
Smoulder into brown and die
Out of shape and animation.

Through the furnace' crimson glow
Screams the jay so bluely winging,
While his answer harsh, the crow
From the topmost pine is flinging.

Creaks the wain, and barks the dog,
Rings the teamster's whoa emphatic,
Thuds the tune of axe and log,
Breaks some childish shout ecstatic:

As the tinted tide of heat
Bubbles redly from the mosses
Into checkerberry sweet,
Or in spray of thistle tosses.

Hark! the seething of the leaves!
Each a fiery pennon waving;
While the eager forest weaves
To and fro with color-craving.

Where Then is Music?



Take the cadence from the streamlet,
Part the robin and its strain,
Rob the leaflets of their rustle
And the breeze from its refrain,—
Where then is music ?

Take the chiming from the steeple,
Take the tinkle from the sheep,
From the bee remove the buzzing,
From the chick the peep, peep, peep,—
Where then is music ?

From the organ take its pealing,
From the drum its hollow thump,
From the cannon take its booming,
Take the blare from fife and trump,—
Where then is music ?

From the voice take modulation,
From the ear the sense of tune,
From the mother's lips the love-phrase,
From the baby mouth the croon,—
Where then is music ?

Love's Freedom.



Now through the purple pores of night
My love to thee is stealing,
It touches out the way aright,
Its sight is in its feeling.

Along the tunnels of the air
By lamps of ether lighted,
It swiftly glides, anew to share
The vows between us plighted.

It pauses not for walls that rear
Their arrogant resistance,
It heeds not the surprise and fear
Of thwarted time and distance;

To matter gives no countersign,
To earth no tie confesses;
But filled with potency divine,
At once, through all, it presses.

'Tis here with me, 'tis there with thee,
It flames between our faces—
Soul-lightning, fetterless, and free,
It leaps across the spaces.

So through the azure cells of night,
My love a path is burning,
And quickened by its warming light,
Thy thought to mine is turning.

To an Autumn Leaf.

v.2

Red tongue 'tween the cheeks of October,
Telling of thoughts sublime
Uttered in tones of color,
Cadenced in rusty rhyme ;

Thoughts that the summer has whispered
Unto each fibre and cell,
Moulded to cone and acorn,
Shaped into kernel and shell ;

Thoughts to the breezes confided,
Breathed from the hemlock and pine,
Formed into fragrance and sifted
Through meshes of shadow and shine ;

Telling of woodland music,
The locust's needle-like lay,
The crow's jet-painted clamor
And the blue note of the jay ;

Chorus of hound and hunter,
The sudden echoing gun,
And the answering shriek of the engine
Upon its distant run.

But more than all these beauties,
Telling a deeper thought—
How with the autumn glory
A mighty truth is fraught.

How the great soul of the forest
In sheaths of color fine,
From every leaf is passing
To join the soul divine.

(By permission of "The Youth's Companion.")

The Coming of Winter.



With drifting step old Winter comes apace,
His chin thick-hung with beard of icicles
Above his snowy breast.
Upon his staff, the tree-trunk brown, he leans,
His flaky locks in white confusion tost,
His breath sharp-drawn and chill.
From town to town, from field to field he goes,
Shedding anon his silver-curling hair
To warm the frosty sod.
How, at his soft and crystal-sandalled tread,
The sleigh-bell chorus tinkles glad salute,
And Frolic runs to see !

Not so the brooklet; for with sudden dread
It hugs its timid tune its banks between,
And gives to Winter's ear
Naught but the icy skeleton of song—
The rhythmic pulses of its cadence sweet
Detained in frozen sound.
Not less afraid, the feathered musics fly,
Leaving their trills upon the air to freeze
Till May the notes revive.
The flowers,—those birds who ne'er from earth escape
To flaunt their petal wings aloft, whose claws
Deep-rooted, hold them fast—
Have moulted long ago their plumage gay ;
Their fragrant voices, locked in Summer's heart,
Await her kind return.

) Lapped in Lethean rest, the bat and bear
In Nature's mother-love have put their trust,
Sure of her waking call ;

Dreaming perchance of some nocturnal deed
Of airy flight at eve, of cavern cool,
Or honey-filled retreat.
Haply, our human life, in truth, is sleep ;
And things that seem awake, in slumber's boat
Drift o'er the sea of dreams.
Would, like the brute, our souls might ever trust
The tender love of God that o'er us broods,
Sure of His call at last.

Pace on, thou hoary patriarch and friend !
Thy cloak of ermine doff, and wrap the hills
Within its warming folds ;
O'er bulb and root, thy palms white-hot extend,
Flake-fingered, thickly charged with burning sleet,
With crystallised sunbeam fraught.
For, lo ! each fluttering fibre of thy form,
Each frozen drop of cloud-dew, blent with thee,
Is tinctured with the sun.
Thy garb, though white, is marrowed through with gold,
And with thy cold the threads of heat are wove
In shining web unseen.

Earth knows thy purpose well, and warms her seeds
Where'er thy footsteps shed their snowy heat,
Or fall thy fleecy sparks.
Tried by thy frozen fire and purified,
Anew shall she be born, brighter in hue,
Sweeter in scent and song.
As moved the prophets three 'mid furnace heats,
So thou, amid thy conflagrations white,
Unscathed dost wend thy way.

And when thy head of cloud is shorn of strength,
Like that of Agonistes, famed of old,
And fall thy locks no more ;

When midst the snow-drop and the crocus gay,
Thy tattered ermine lies ; then lay thee down
To thy well-earned repose.
On Spring's green pyre of blade and leaf dissolve,
Till sun in snow and sun in verdure blend,
And heat with heat unite.

Passion and peace.



Peace and passion, passion and peace—
When will your tilt, alternate, cease ?
Up with the one and down with the other,
Shifting about from smooth to smother ;
Here with the tempest, there with the calm,
Now with the bruises, then with the balm ;
First with pallor, next with flush,
Moments of tumult, moments of hush ;—
Ever the restless spirit ranges
Round the ring of endless changes ;
Till at last the touch of death
Breaks the circuit of the breath,
Stops the race of thought and feeling
Pulses from the nerve-wire stealing.
Yet the current floweth ever,
For its force is broken never.
What then is the final end ?
Must the struggle still extend ?
Is it fever, is it frost,
Peace ne'er won, nor passion lost
Through the far eternity ?
Come ! this riddle solve for me.

Riddle of the Snow-flakes.

✓

Seeds of heat that whitely burrow
In each brown and frosty furrow,
Twirled and tangled, sifted, slanted,
By the eager breezes planted—
Spring in you her wealth is keeping,
In your white her green is sleeping.
In your frozen friendship, hearted,
All her blossoms sweet are started;
And each flake that earthward settles
Is a nest for future petals.
Sunbeams into crystal moulded,
Fire in snow by Winter folded,
June entombed in January—
Paradox that cannot vary,
Who shall find the end or middle
Of this wondrous snow-flake riddle?

(By kind permission of "The Youth's Companion.")

The Snow-Cloth Makers.

* *

Falling lightly,
Falling whitely
From the upper to the nether,
Now apart and now together,
Turning, trailing,
Sinking, sailing,
Hide and seek with zephyr playing,
Then the call of earth obeying ;
Slow and agile,
Fibered, fragile ;
Cotton from the fields of vapor,
Snow-wool tossed in whirl and caper ;
Picked and folded,
Carded, moulded ;
By the wind-loom woven swiftly
Into snow-lace soft and drifty,
Curling, twisting
Swirling, misting,
Scarf and mantle spun and fashioned
By the storm-wheel's power impassioned ;
Clinging, winding
Stinging, blinding ;
Trunk and twig soon thickly flaking,
Sash and ribbon for them making ;
Pillar, picket,
Wall and wicket
Decking with a quaint designing
For the shivering vine entwining
Vesture pearly
Looped and curly ;—
Snow-threads we, that downward travel,
That from skeins of cloud unravel ;

Oft capricious,
Gentle, vicious,
We the happy snow-cloth makers,
Carpeting Earth's barren acres,
 Turn our duties
 Into beauties,
Turn our tumult's wildest rushes
Into flashing, crystal hushes,
 While all color
 Darker, duller,
And all things now lost to brightness,
Find salvation in our whiteness.

(By kind courtesy of "The Youth's Companion.")

Her Touch.



Her touch is like the flutter
 Of a rose-leaf on my cheek,
So timorous and tender,
 So maiden-coy and meek.

Her touch is like the falling
 Of a sunbeam on my heart,
So warm and bright with impulse,
 So full of dance and dart.

Her touch is like the ripple
 Of the breeze upon my brow,
So lingering and lulling
 And breathing of the *now*.

Her touch is like the starbeam
 That shivers down the night,
And chills where'er it falleth
 With cold and frosty light.

Her touch is like the falling
 Of fairy flakes of snow,
So innocent yet heedless
 Of freezing all below.

Her touch with love is sweetened
 Or soured with sudden hate,
Within her palm's pink hollow
 There sits her lover's fate.

Reversible Poem.



The dark's in the light,
The hush in the sound
In the tumult of motion
Rest slumbers profound.

The sweet's in the sour,
The small's in the great,
The will's in the meshes
Of merciless fate.

The light's in the dark,
The sound's in the hush ;
In the heart of repose
Is motion's loud rush.

The sour's in the sweet.
The great's in the small ;
And fate ever answers
The will's lightest call.

The first's in the last,
The soon's in the late ;
Destroy hath its cold
In the heat of create.

The smile's in the tear,
The joy's in the pain,
The drought waiteth couchant
In each drop of rain.

The last's in the first,
The late's in the soon,
From the dry lips of drought
Rain learns its sweet tune.

The tear's in the smile,
The pain's in the joy,
Create hath its stars
In the night of destroy.

East and West.



The East called to the West,
“Where is your place of rest ?
Lo ! when I give you chase
Around the ring of space,
My grasp you still elude—
Phantom of distance, shrewd!
Is there no common ground
In all this weary round
Where we may hold our tryst
And twain as one exist ?
How from dawn’s purple height
My fancy sends its sight
O’er the gold bridge of day
To your red plume so gay ;
Rising to greet the ken
Of earth’s most under men,
Falling, alas, to me !
And ah ! how enviously,
Pursuing sight, my touch
Hobbles on Time’s slow crutch
To feel your crimson heart
Ebb out the words, ‘We part ’—
Ere the thick doors of night
Forbid such pure delight !
In vain, too late I come—
Your voice to me is dumb,
Vanished your beckoning plume,
Sullen the gates of gloom ;
Where rested you, I rest—
But west no more is west.
Still with a lover’s hope
Upon my quest I grope,

Trusting there is an end
That shall our fragments mend—
A point, a timeless place
Shut from the maw of space,
Where east in west shall cease,
And west with east have peace.”

To My Love Across the Snow.

.x.

Over the white, under the blue,
I'm calling, love, to you, to you!
Through purple corridors of night
Echoes the note of my delight.
Distance! 'tis but the ether wall
That unto you transmits my call,
Space lends her ear of crescent moon
To hear my heart beat out its tune,
Then runs to you with vibrant feet,
The tender cadence to repeat;
Nor frosty air nor chill of snow
Retards that music's subtle flow.
Let tinkling tongues of pleasure tell
Their rhapsody from bell to bell,
Their dulcet din ne'er shuts from you
My voice between the white and blue;
Into the pores of air I speak,
My sigh is wafted to your cheek;
The kiss I press upon your lips
To you upon a moonbeam slips.
What need for nearer touch of flesh,
When through the coarse aerial mesh
Our spirits pure so freely range,
Love's tokens sweet to interchange?

Young Christmas.



"Tis he !
With toe a-tip
And laugh on lip,
With large, inquiring eyes
And shout of glad surprise !
The wild, white music of the snow,
Beating its rhythms to and fro,
The red tune snapping from the eager log,
The shadows nestling soft in niche and jog—
He heeds them not, for all his soul is wide to see
The gifts that cluster there around the festal tree.
Wrapt in the moment of his pure delight,
He knows not past nor future, morn nor night ;
Asleep, awake, in heart and brain—
His pleasure strung to pitch of pain—
Yet neither. Ah, how blest
To find such point of rest,
At God's own poise
Of griefs and joys
To be !

Wrinkled Brow and Dimpled Chin.



Wrinkled brow and dimpled chin
Sat amid the Christmas din,
Eager, each, with glowing heart,
Gift and gladness to impart.
One looked down from height of years
On the scene, through mist of tears;
One looked up from childhood's plane,
All untried in heart and brain.

Age in memory's fetters fast
Saw a yuletide of the past,
When Hope's sun high on its course
Knew no shadow of remorse,
And when Death's horizon lay
Wrapt in cloudland far away.
Youth in expectation's charm,
Tossing toys from palm to palm,
Saw naught in the world amiss,
Felt no limit of his bliss.

Age looked through the book of yore—
Every page was wrinkled o'er,
Blotted oft, and thumbed with care,
Showing only here and there
Tender joys, like rose leaves pressed,
Breathing still their fragrance blest.
Youth with eye and ear attune,
Only knew December—June—
This with all its frosty fun,
That with scent and song and sun.

Dimpled chin and wrinkled brow,
Blending in the happy now—
Ah, how strange the man should gain
Happiness through gates of pain
And the bright, unthinking boy
Find his woe through doors of joy.

Morn and Night.



O morn! that breaks in golden gleams
Over the eastern rim of night,
Kissing the flowerets from their dreams
Till from their petal lips so bright
The spirit of each blossom fair,
Enwrapped in perfume, softly steals
To sweeten all the amber air
And hover o'er the dewy fields,—

Immortal morn! whose glorious beams
Break o'er the sombre verge of death
Waking the soul from earthly dreams
Till from the lips, that vital breath,
That chord of unheard music floats
To swell the sweet, ethereal strain
And add another stave of notes
From life's great scale of joy and pain,—

O night! that creeps with silvery feet
Over the far funereal gray,
Breathing a requiem flowery sweet
Through all the twilight tomb of day,—
O death! whose dread indelible stain
Blots out the spirit's golden shine,
Dark'ning our whitest joy with pain,
Hiding the page of life divine,—

The mystery that fills ye all,
Our reverent search must e'er invite;
But though your names we loudly call—
What's death, or life, or morn, or night?





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